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Thank you for again electing me to the General Assembly and I am pleased to have been appointed again as co-chair of the Labor and Public Employees Committee and the Collective Bargaining subcommittee of the Appropriations Committee as well as a member of the Public Health Committee.

I am looking forward to serving you, my constituency, at the Capitol. I am ready to begin working on some of the major issues facing the state which will be addressed during the 2005 session. I have included a brief synopsis of these issues inside this newsletter.

At the end of the 2005 session, you will be receiving a newsletter from me which will update you on actions taken by the legislature, particularly on those issues that affect you directly.

Please contact me for more information, to voice your concerns or to share your ideas.

I can be reached:

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*State Representative*  
**Kevin Ryan**

# 2005 Legislative Issues

**139th District**

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# 2005 Legislative Issues

## Education Funding

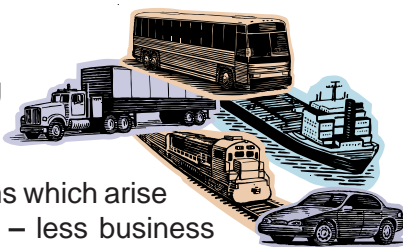
Despite projections of a significant budget deficit, it is imperative that this year the legislature re-examine the Education Cost Sharing (ECS) formula, the state funding obligation that assists municipalities with local education costs. Many towns throughout Connecticut are struggling with similar issues: rising enrollment, greater special education costs and the unhappy solution of raising local taxes or cutting services to keep up. I believe a fairer and better ECS formula that reflects current funding challenges will help address the problem.

## Ethics and Contracting Reform

In the wake of revelations throughout 2004 of ethical lapses – and outright criminal misconduct in state government – the legislature must assure the people of Connecticut that such behavior will not be tolerated. To do this, state watchdog agencies must continue to be empowered, independent voices and state procurement and bidding processes must be clear, transparent and uniform. I believe state residents deserve – and demand – these and other high standards.

## Transportation

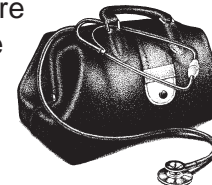
The legislature has been studying transportation options in the state for several years now. Everyone recognizes the problems which arise from these transportation issues – less business development, pollution, higher accident rates, longer commutes. The solutions are harder to find. I believe we need to make a commitment to a long-term plan that could be implemented in stages.



## Medical Malpractice

Dramatically increasing medical malpractice insurance premiums have caused some doctors, particularly those in high-risk practices, to retire, leave their practices or move out of state. Unfortunately, finding a solution acceptable to the doctors, insurance companies, lawyers and victims is a very sensitive and complicated issue. A bill was introduced and passed during the last session which was vetoed by the Governor because it did not include caps on awards.

Because this issue affects everyone of us in the state, it is a high priority of mine for this session. I will be looking at the positions of each of the interested parties and trying to find a compromise which will protect the victims while keeping health care affordable. I believe this is an issue that will take a great deal of time and study during the legislative session.



## Campaign Finance Reform

Given the rising costs of political campaigns and the ethical lapses we have suffered in the last several years, the legislature will once again address campaign finance reform, possibly combined with further tightening of contracting, bidding and ethics rules. The challenge in revising the campaign finance laws lies in deciding which options best address the continuing need for funding and the inherent ethical risks in obtaining the funding for a political campaign. I want to evaluate the existing proposals and determine whether a reasonable, workable law can be passed based on those proposals.



## Budget

Although the Office of Policy and Management and the Office of Fiscal Analysis are both projecting a surplus for this fiscal year, they are also both forecasting a budget deficit in the next fiscal year. This means that we will need to take a close look at both taxing and spending. Important decisions will need to be made about the state budget during the coming months — whether to cut funding, increase taxes, or contribute money to the rainy day fund or to find other methods of providing needed services while balancing the budget. These decisions will affect both taxes and spending as well as the quality and availability of state services in the future. I intend to look closely at every proposal set forth to meet our objectives and to make the best decision possible for the people of the state and the preservation of our high quality of life. I welcome any comments or suggestions you may have concerning the budget or the various programs and services provided by the state.



## Energy Costs

With the unrest in the Middle East forcing the price of oil to rise, we are now paying the highest energy prices in the history of the United States. These prices not only greatly impact every family in the country, they also have a detrimental effect on businesses. All businesses feel the effects of higher energy costs, but transportation services are the hardest hit, as they also have to cope with higher fuel costs. Prices then must increase to cover the rising cost of energy. The consumer is paying higher prices at home and in the marketplace. These increases cut into discretionary spending, affecting the economic outlook of the region and the country. The Northeast has not rebounded economically as well as the rest of the country, and it would be to our benefit to look at energy costs to determine if there is anything the legislature can do to reduce these costs for consumers.

### *Any Questions?*

Call me at **1-800-842-8267**, e-mail me at **Kevin.Ryan@cga.ct.gov**  
or write me at the **Legislative Office Building, Hartford, CT 06106-1591**

State Representative  
**Kevin Ryan**